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ABSTRACT

The Regis Career Education Program (RECEP) is an accelerated degree-granting program for adults at Regis College in Denver, Colorado. Since the program began in 1979, there has been a steady increase in enrollments and, consequently, a steady increase in the number of adjunct faculty. These adjunct faculty members are generally drawn from outside the usual academic confines, and they lack the institutional affiliations to be classified according to academic rankings that distinguish junior and senior faculty. In an effort to differentiate between the roles of the adjunct and regular faculty members in the RECEP program, a two-tiered structure of adjunct faculty was created. This included a "lead faculty" to (1) aid in the orientation of new faculty members, (2) aid in the coordination of an area or group of faculty in relationship to revising or developing curriculum materials, and (3) be instrumental in a peer evaluation process for faculty development. The second tier consists of faculty members who work on a course-by-course contractual basis (as they did in the past). At the time of the policy's initiation, 22 of RECEP's 150 adjunct faculty members were selected as lead faculty. Lead faculty are appointed for two years on the basis of student evaluation and evidence of commitment to and longevity in RECEP. Other responsibilities of lead faculty include monitoring new faculty, assisting in the provision of inservice training, and serving in a liaison role between campus and adjunct faculty. (MN)

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A model for differentiation of adjunct faculty

By Kenneth E. Paprock

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The Regis Career Education Program (RECEP) is an accelerated degree-granting program for adults and is a part of Regis College in Denver, Colorado. Since it began in 1979, there has been a steady increase in enrollments and consequently in the number of adjunct faculty. This growth over the years had prompted thinking in the direction of creating a more efficient and effective method of working with this increasing number of adjunct faculty. One way was to utilize the resources available, namely, the existing faculty. Characteristics of the existing RECEP faculty are: They are being drawn from outside usual academic confines (i.e., RECEP faculty are generally employed in organizations other than academic), and they lack the institutional affiliations to be classified according to academic rankings which distinguish senior from junior faculty. The adjunct title used in the RECEP program designates individuals who are considered part-time and under contract to teach for limited periods of time (i.e., five-week sessions) at various locations in and around Denver.

Although adjunct faculty in a program such as RECEP may perform in ways similar to academics in more traditional settings, they may not be the average part-time faculty as we know it. RECEP faculty exhibit a commitment which transcends the usual part-time model. These are not people who simply drop in to teach a class. Rather, these are people who willingly participate actively in the life of the institution. They regularly attend faculty meetings. Many contribute substantially to curriculum development, refinements, and evaluation. Most are involved with Regis on a continuing rather than an episodic basis.

One of the challenges was to capitalize upon this energy and commitment demonstrated by the RECEP faculty. It was difficult to apply traditional criteria in evaluating and assigning status to this type of faculty because of the differences mentioned. Essentially; an entirely different structure was needed when viewing faculty in this type of nontraditional educational program.

The first step taken was to meet with several of the adjunct faculty to discuss the issue. During these meetings a number of suggestions were voiced relating to the establishment of a "lead faculty" which would not only help in the formation of a peer evaluation system but also improve the span of control of the Director of Faculty and Curriculum. It was recommended to replace the concept of a "pool of instructors" with the more defined concept of a "faculty" who are positioned in the program according to seniority, ability, and contribution to the program.

Differentiation of roles was considered to be an important step in the recognition of status. This was considered to be beneficial in that it provided the extrinsic reward of recognized contribution to the institution. At the same time, it served as an intrinsic reward for the individual in clarifying his or her status and position within the community of faculty. As a result of this thinking a "two-tier" structure of adjunct faculty was adopted by Regis for the RECEP program. This included a "lead faculty" for the following purposes:

1. to aid in the *orientation* of new faculty members in RECEP (e.g., as a contact person for each particular content area),
2. to aid in the *coordination* of an area or group of faculty in relationship to revising or developing curriculum materials, and
3. to be instrumental in a peer *evaluation* process for faculty development.

This two-tier faculty consists of (1) faculty members who are functioning the same as they have in the past (i.e., on a course- by-course contractual basis) and (2) a lead faculty who assist in the above roles of orientation, coordination, and evaluation as well as function in the classroom.

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It was determined that anyone who is a member of the lead faculty should have knowledge, experience, values, and commitment to which students respond, share the assumptions on which the institution is built, and be able to assist in passing the historical and value-centered education orientation of Regis College to future RECEP faculty. Initially RECEP faculty members were appointed to the lead faculty by the Director of Faculty and Curriculum for a two-year term using criteria based upon (1) student evaluation, (2) evidence of commitment to Regis, and (3) longevity in RECEP. These appointments could be renewed. The total process described was to be reviewed annually by the Dean, the Program Director, and the Director of Faculty and Curriculum in order to either revise, change, or continue the process as is.

The ratio of lead faculty was to be in proportion to the number of RECEP faculty per discipline. At the time of initiation one year ago, there were 150 active adjunct faculty members in RECEP. A lead faculty of 22 were selected for the first term as a pilot group. Of this 22, 17 were adjunct faculty, 3 were full-time RECEP faculty members, and 2 were from the traditional campus full-time faculty. The reason for the latter was to enhance the full-time faculty's involvement in RECEP and encourage closer relationship with traditional faculty and RECEP faculty.

Upon adopting this concept, a lead faculty meeting was held; and the responsibilities were outlined. They were expected to:

1. monitor the progress of new faculty who have been given conditional approval to teach and report concerning their progress to the Director of Faculty and Curriculum,
2. monitor new faculty either by attending their initial classes or having new faculty audit the lead faculty member's classes,
3. on a prescribed time schedule set up a minimum number of evaluation visits to the classes of current RECEP faculty,
4. act as a resource to other RECEP and/or full-time faculty members to share information about supplemental materials as they relate to courses (i.e., case studies, articles, publications, exercises, and so on),
5. assist the Director of Faculty and Curriculum in providing in-service sessions for new and existing RECEP faculty, and
6. serve in a liaison role between campus faculty and adjunct faculty to integrate academic theory as well as practical application to continually upgrade the academic substance included in RECEP courses.

It was also decided that lead faculty meet a minimum of once per academic semester with the Director for the purpose of sharing information and further suggestions for improvement. Meetings for other purposes would be held on an "as needed" basis. All lead faculty were expected to participate directly as members of a team or indirectly as advisors in curriculum revisions related to their areas of expertise and to assist in communicating any changes to their assigned areas.

This approach has been successful during the first year, and its continuation appears to be assured. It is offered here as a possible approach in working with a large group of adjunct faculty in adult nontraditional educational programs. **AAACE**

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